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Message Text

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SUBJECT: SOVIET JEWS WHO CHANGE DIRECTIONS IN VIENNA

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE ARTICLE ENTITLED QUOTE ISRAEL ACTS TO KEEP SOVIET JEWS COMING UNQUOTE, WHICH APPEARED IN THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, JULY 18.

"FACED WITH A 60 PERCENT DEFECTION AMONG PROSPECTIVE EMIGRES FROM THE SOVIET UNION, ISRAELI AND JEWISH LEADERS BEGAN TODAY A TOP-PRIORITY STUDY OF WAYS TO STEM THE DROP-OUT RATE, INCLUDING A CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSAL TO CUT OFF AID TO JEWS FREED BY RUSSIA WHO DECLINE TO SETTLE HERE.
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"PRIME MINISTER YITZHAK RABIN APPROVED SETTING UP A HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE INCLUDING FOUR ISRAELIS AND FOUR AMERICAN JEWS TO STUDY THE PROBLEM.

"BUT GRISHA FEIGIN, HEAD OF THE SOVIET IMMIGRANT'S ASSOCIATION HERE, COMPLAINED THAT THE FORMER SOVIET JEWS LIVING HERE ARE BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE STUDY PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT VITAL DECISIONS AFFECTING THE IMMIGRANTS SHOULD NOT BE LEFT IN THE HANDS OF VETERAN ZIONIST FUNCTIONARIES, QUOTE FOR MOST OF WHOM THE ISSUE OF SOVIET JEWRY IS AT BEST A HOBBY AND AT WORST A BUSINESS.

THE NEW COMMITTEE WAS INSTRUCTED TO DRAW UP RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN 90 DAYS TO REVERSE THE WORSENING DROPOUT RATE. THE RATE OF DEFECTIONS BY SOVIET JEWS ALLOWED TO LEAVE RUSSIA HAS CLIMBED STEADILY FROM 25 PERCENT IN 1974 TO 60 PERCENT IN RECENT MONTHS.

"BARELY 3,000 OF THE 6,000 JEWS WHO LEFT RUSSIA OSTENSIBLY EN ROUTE TO ISRAEL VIA VIENNA SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR CHOSE TO SETTLE HERE, THE REST DROPPING OUT IN AUSTRIA, INTENDING TO SETTLE IN THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AUSTRALIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

"THE HEAVY DEFECTIONS WERE TRACED TO WORD TRICKLING BACK TO THE SOVIET UNION ABOUT DIFFICULTIES OF ADJUSTING TO A NEW LIFE IN ISRAEL , ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND OTHER UNCERTAINTIES.

"ONE PROPOSAL THE COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING IS TO REFUSE ECONOMIC AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO JEWS WHO DROP OUT AT VIENNA. THE HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY, FUNDED BY THE UNITED JEWISH APPEAL IN THE U.S., AND THE JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE WOULD BE URGED TO COOPERATE IN THE FREEZE.

"THE PROPOSAL HAS DRAWN FIRE FROM FORMER SOVIET JEWS HERE, WHO WARNED THAT IT WILL BACKFIRE BY PROVIDING SOVIET AUTHORITIES WITH AMMUNITION TO DISCREDIT ISRAEL AS A DEMOCRACY, AND IT COULD UNDERMINE THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA.
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"PROMINENT JEWS HERE FROM THE SOVIET UNION URGED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAKE IMMIGRATION MORE ATTRACTIVE BY CURTAILING BUREAUCRACY AND PROVIDING BETTER CONDITIONS FOR SOVIET NEWCOMERS, MANY OF WHOM COMPLAIN OF INADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT AND RESTRICTED OPPORTUNITIES.

"YEHEZKEL POLAREVICH, HEAD OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ONE-TIME

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IMPRISONED SOVIET ZIONISTS, CHARGED THAT THE ISRAEL PUBLIC IS INDIFFERENT TO THE IMMIGRANTS, AND THAT IF THEY HAD SHOWN A FRACTION OF THE ENTHUSIASM THEYDISPLAYED OVER A SOCCER MATCH, IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH BETTER."

2. THE ARTICLE QUOTE ISRAEL EYES PENALTIES TO KEEP SOVIET JEWS UNQUOTE PRINTED IN THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE ON JULY 20 ALSO CONTAINED THIS TEXT. KISSINGER

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